More powers to NPPA

50. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have delegated more power to the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority under which it can autonomously revise prices of drugs downwards allowing annual increase of 20 per cent in case of an unjustified price rise;

(b) whether the draft pharma policy referred to a Group of Ministers, proposes to bring the threshold limit down to 10 per cent in a year;

(c) whether a notification issued by Government recently enables NPPA to check drug prices in cases of extreme fluctuation; and

(d) whether, this would help NPPA to act faster against companies and also avoid duplication of efforts between Government and authority?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) The Government has delegated powers to the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) for fixation of prices of non-Scheduled formulations under Para 10(b) of Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 1995). Further, Government has also reduced the permissible price increase limit in 12 calendar months from 20 per cent to 10 per cent for more effective check on price increases. The monitoring of prices of non-Scheduled formulations is currently on the/basis of data from ORG-IMS.

(b)No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Subsequent to delegation of powers, NPPA have fixed prices in respect of 22 non-Scheduled formulations under para 10(b) of DPCO 1995. The delegation has facilitated in expeditious action by the NPPA to monitor and control the prices in case of increases beyond the prescribed limit with respect to non Scheduled formulations.

Food security

51. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the slump in wheat output threatens food security and wheat production has come down from 76 million tonnes in 1999-2000 to 74 MT this year and Government have been forced to go in for import of 5 MT of grain for the second consecutive year;

(b) if so, whether decline in production in turn affects Government's buffer stocks and public distribution system procurement; and

(c) if so, what are the concrete steps and the measures Government propose to take to meet the shortage of wheat output in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) As per the Fourth Advance estimates released by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation the production of wheat in crop year 2006-07 (to be marketed in 2007-08) was 74.89 million tonnes which is adequate to meet the estimated demand of 71.32 million tonnes in the country in 2007-08. Import of wheat for Central Pool is being resorted to in 2007-08 since procurement of wheat in Rabi Marketing Season (RMS), 2007-08 for the Central Pool was only 111 lakh tonnes against stimated requirement of about 150 lakh tonnes of wheat for the TPDS and welfare schemes.

Procurement of foodgrains depends upon a number of factors such as production, market

arrivals, open market prices, stocks of foodgrains in Central Pool, market sentiments, cooperation by State Government and extent of private participation. The shortfall in procurement in RMS 2007-08 is being made up through imports of wheat which will enable distribution of allocated wheat through the public distribution system and also ensure maintenance of wheat stocks as per the buffer norms as on 1st April, 2008.

(c) The Government has announced a Minimum Support Price of Rs. 1000 per quintal of wheat for RMS 2008-09 to encourage fanners to grow more wheat in the next crop year. Moreover, to increase production of wheat, rice and coarse cereals, Centrally Sponsored Integrated Cereals Development Programme (ICDP) is in operation from October, 2000. The Government has also initiated two schemes for increasing foodgrains production and improving the agricultural growth in the country. These are (i) National Pood Security Mission (NFSM) and (ii) Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana (RKVY).

Buffer stock

52. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had adequate buffer stocks to meet the requirements of people;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) what steps Government are taking to supply additional stocks in case of natural calamities; and

(e) what is the policy of Government in times of natural calamities in providing food to the shelterless and homeless poor persons in the country alongwith the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) The stock position of Foodgrains in Central Pool *vis-a-vis* buffer norms during the last three years is given as Stalement-l (See below). The buffer norms are maintained for the Central Pool for the country as a whole and not State-wise. The stocks of wheat were less from 01.07.2005 to 01.10.2006 and of rice on 01.10.2005. This was due to less procurement.

(d) and (e) Additional allocation of foodgrains are made over and above normal Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) quota for relief in cases of natural calamities *viz.* floods, earthquake, drought, cyclones, etc. on the recommendations of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the nodal Ministry for disaster management. Details of foodgrains allocated during last three years as a part of relief measures given as Statement-II

Statement-I

Stock position of Rice and Wheat vis-a-vis buffer norms during the last three years

(in lakh tons)

As on	Wheat		Rice		Total	
	Actual stock	Buffer norms	Actual stock	Buffer norms	Actual stock	Buffer norms
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.1.2004	126.87	84.00	117 27	84 00	244 14	168.00